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DEPT FOR IO/PSC, EUR/RUS, EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [GG](#) [RU](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: U/SYG LEROY TELLS QUAD RUSSIA AND UN
CONTROLLER ARE OBSTACLES TO HIGH-LEVEL UN ENVOY

REF: STATE 114032

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) A high level Quad delegation underlined with UN Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Alain Le Roy the need to preserve a strong and effective high-level UN envoy to replace Johan Verbeke when he steps down from the position of UN Representative to the Geneva Talks and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) on December ¶31. Speaking as coordinator of the Quad on Georgia, German Deputy Permrep Martin Ney said that the Quad believed someone of the stature of a former SRSG or Ambassador should be appointed to replace Verbeke. The position should be full-time, and should involve the ability to spend considerable time on the ground in Georgia to engage with the parties and facilitate the IPRM. USUN Pol Couns, drawing on points reftel, noted that Verbeke's position had already been downgraded as a result of the closure of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), and that a further downgrade would undermine efforts to ensure Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain UN priorities.

¶2. (C) Le Roy said he agreed, in principle, but that Russia had been opposed to having a high-level envoy replace Verbeke. He said that recent conversations with Russian Permrep Vitaly Churkin indicated that Russia's position had softened, and that Moscow might support continuation of the position. Le Roy was less sure about whether Russia would support maintaining the position title. Le Roy suggested that an additional Quad push with the Russians to underline the continuing need for a senior level envoy with an appropriate title would be helpful. Quad representatives acknowledged the need to approach Russia.

¶3. (C) Le Roy also noted that funding a UN Representative and his/her staff for an additional year would cost \$4-6 million. Verbeke's position as well as other UN staff working on the IPRM and Geneva process had been funded as part of "unforeseen" budgetary expenses related to the closure of UNOMIG, but he said the UN Controller had indicated a reluctance to allocate funds for Georgia beyond 2009 absent some indication from the Security Council that it would like the UN to be involved in Georgia. Le Roy noted that he had hoped that the Security Council would respond to the Secretary-General's letter of September 28, which outlined his plans for continued UN involvement, but that he understood Russia had not wanted the Council to respond. LeRoy also acknowledged that the Secretary-General could use his discretion to appoint a Special Advisor or Special Envoy without Security Council concurrence, but that the SYG would

be reluctant to do so without P-5 concurrence. LeRoy encouraged Quad representatives to discuss the issue with the Controller, and with the Secretary-General's Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar.
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